

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 058761

42

ORIGIN PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 MC-02

OMB-01 /065 R

DRAFTED BY PM/SAS:DRKEENE:RG

APPROVED BY PM/SAS:SWINSHIP

PM/SAS - MR. JAMES

NEA/ARP - MR. AHERNE

NEA/RA - COL. HOBBS

DOD/DSAA - COL. MARTIN

H - MR. FLATEN

----- 086315

R 102358Z MAR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

INFO SECDEF

USCINCEUR

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 058761

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MARR, SA, US

SUBJECT: SAUDI CONCERN ABOUT PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF ARMS
PURCHASES FROM THE US

REF: JIDDA 1597

1. DEPARTMENT UNDERSTANDS SAG CONCERN ABOUT PUBLIC DIS-
CLOSURE OF FMS PURCHASES, BUT SEES NO REALISTIC HOPE THAT
SITUATION WILL CHANGE IN THE DIRECTION OF GREATER SECRECY,
AS SAG WISHES.

2. AS EMBASSY AWARE, SECTION 36(B) OF THE FOREIGN MILITARY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 058761

SALES ACT REQUIRES NOTIFICATION TO THE CONGRESS OF ALL LOAS

OVER \$25 MILLION. NOTIFICATION IS EFFECTED BY MEANS OF A LETTER FROM DOD TO SPECIFIC CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES (SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE, HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE) AND TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE. THE LETTER CONTAINS THE NAME OF THE PROSPECTIVE PURCHASING COUNTRY, THE VALUE OF THE LOA, A DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTICLE OR SERVICE OFFERED, THE US MILITARY DEPARTMENT MANAGING THE SALE, AND THE DATE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS. ANY ONE OR ALL FIVE OF THESE ITEMS MAY OR MAY NOT BE CLASSIFIED. IT HAS BEEN THE DEPARTMENT'S PRACTICE TO CLASSIFY ANY ITEM THAT WOULD REVEAL ORDER OF BATTLE INFORMATION FOR THE PROSPECTIVE PURCHASING COUNTRY WHEN ACTUAL MILITARY WEAPONS ARE INVOLVED, BUT NOT TO CLASSIFY CONSTRUCTION OR SERVICE LOAS (SUCH AS COE PROJECTS). IN FACT, THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEAPON IN THE CASES RECENTLY SENT TO CONGRESS WERE CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL.

3. IN ADDITION THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE CONGRESS AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE. IF HEARINGS ARE HELD, MUCH OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE LOAS INEVITABLY IS AIRED PUBLICLY. IF THE LOAS OR PORTIONS OF THE LOAS ARE NOT CLASSIFIED, DOD MAKES A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE FORM OF A PRESS RELEASE AFTER THE LOA IS SENT TO CONGRESS. FURTHERMORE, JOURNALISTS FREQUENTLY ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN INFO RE THE SUBSTANCE OF CLASSIFIED LOAS AND PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS OF LOAS PENDING CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ARE COMMON. THIS SITUATION IS TRUE OF COURSE FOR ALL PROSPECTIVE PURCHASERS, NOT JUST SAUDI ARABIA.

4. GIVEN WIDESPREAD CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC INTEREST IN ARMS SALES TO THE PERSIAN GULF AREA, IT IS REGRETTABLY UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT ANY GREAT DEGREE OF CONFIDENTIALITY CAN BE MAINTAINED. PENDING LEGISLATION IMPOSES ADDITIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, MAY RESTRICT THE EXECUTIVE'S FLEXIBILITY AS REGARDS CLASSIFICATION (ALTHOUGH BILL IS NOT AT VARIANCE WITH CURRENT PRACTICE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 058761

AS CITED PARA 2 ABOVE), AND WOULD BRING ALL CASES (BOTH COMMERCIAL AND FMS) OVER \$25 MILLION AND MANY LESSER SALES UNDER CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW. THIS MEANS THAT CONGRESS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SCRUTINIZE THOSE CASES THAT ARE NOW CONDUCTED THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS (I-HAWK PROGRAM FOR EXAMPLE) IN THE SAME MANNER AS FMS CASES.

5. THERE IS HOWEVER A POSITIVE SIDE TO THIS PICTURE, AND SAUDIS SHOULD UNDERSTAND IT. AS WITH THE LETTERS OF OFFER RECENTLY SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS FOR MAVERICK, BRIGADE MECHANIZATION EQUIPMENT, AND CONSTRUCTION, CONGRESSIONAL SCRUTINY AND APPROVAL IMPLIES A GREATER U.S. COMMITMENT TO THE PROGRAMS THAN EXECUTIVE BRANCH DECISION ALONE WOULD. THE FACT THAT THESE LETTERS OF OFFER WERE THOROUGHLY VETTED BEFORE THE CONGRESS, AND THE RATIONALE FOR THEM CLEARLY EXPLAINED, PRODUCED A GREATER CONGRESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POLICY TOWARD SAUDI ARABIA, AND THAT CAN ONLY BE HELPFUL IN THE LONG TERM. MOREOVER, THE FACT THAT THIS SCRUTINY WAS FOLLOWED BY SPECIFIC AND FORMAL CONGRESSIONAL ACTION REJECTING RESOLUTIONS OFFERED TO DISAPPROVE THE SALES MEANS, IN EFFECT, THAT CONGRESS HAS RATIFIED IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN OUR MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH SAUDI ARABIA. THAT TOO CAN ONLY BE HELPFUL IN THE LONG RUN, AND SHOULD ALSO BE AN ENCOURAGING SIGN TO THE SAUDIS THAT SAUDI-U.S. FRIENDSHIP IS BROADLY BASED.

IT ALSO REPRESENTS INCREASED PUBLIC RECOGNITION BY CONGRESS THAT SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH SAUDI ARABIA IS IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. FINALLY FAVORABLE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IN THIS REGARD IS A CONVINCING DEMONSTRATION THAT CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS OVER THE BOYCOTT AND VISA POLICY ISSUES ARE NOT SIMPLY A MANIFESTATION OF THE STRENGTH OF ONE OR ANOTHER INTEREST GROUP, BUT A SINCERE FEELING ON THE PART OF MANY THAT THESE ISSUES INVOLVE MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO AMERICANS.

6. EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON ABOVE AS IT FEELS APPROPRIATE TO REPLY TO SAG EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN, ASSURING SAG THAT THE USG WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS.

INGERSOLL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 058761

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, ARMED FORCES, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE058761
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DRKEENE:RG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760092-0796
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760374/aaaacnbnm.tel
Line Count: 154
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 JIDDA 1597
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <21 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAUDI CONCERN ABOUT PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF ARMS PURCHASES FROM THE US
TAGS: MASS, MARR, SA, US
To: JIDDA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006